

What Will be the Fate of the Queens Ponds?

A report of the New York Microscopical Society—Torrey Botanical Club field meeting of June 30, at Queens Pond, by John M. Sheridan, Secretary of the Microscopical Society, suggests that something ought to be done by the scientific societies of the city and others interested in the conservation of its remaining natural scenery, for the retention of the natural conditions in the moraine area north of Queens and Bellaire which has lately been taken by the City of New York, for a new park.

"This old favorite pond of ours was lower in water than I have ever seen it," writes Mr. Sheridan, "but still teems with most interesting forms of insect and plant life. A great many flying insects were noted, and I observed many forms of dragon flies especially. Many birds also made the trip still more delightful. On the way home we hiked to the pond in Hollis.



A deep kettle hole pond, 60 feet below surrounding moraine, in Hillside Park, an abandoned automobile in the edge of the water.

We found it with plenty of water but in an awful state of pollution owing to the rubbish of old water boilers, and several discarded autos. A shame that such a bright, pleasing stretch of water in a beautiful setting of trees should be allowed to fill up with junk. Any student of pond life will be well repaid by visiting the pond in Queens Village."



Kettle hole pond in moraine near 212th Street, in area taken by the city for Hillside Park. The water is covered with the common Bladderwort in bloom.

I presume Mr. Sheridan refers first to the collection of beautiful little kettle hole ponds, just back of the front of the moraine, in the area, to the west of 212th street as it is extended up hill from Hillside avenue, which has been taken over by the city. One of these has been known to botanists as Potamogeton Pond, from the occurrence of *Potamogeton natans*, the floating pondweed, there. Its shores, as I saw them about the same time as Mr. Sheridan's visit, were defaced by abandoned automobiles. The city has only recently

taken title and has done no improvement work, and it is a convenient resort for anyone who has an old car whose presence is embarrassing and which he wishes to discard painlessly. But on another of this group of kettle hole ponds, to the north, I saw a beautiful sight, thousands of the bright yellow, bonnet-shaped blooms of the Common Bladderwort, in prime condition about July 1. Boy Scouts still camp in the woods about these ponds, and the timber is one of the best remaining natural stands in the Greater City. Much of it has been cut to clear new streets for a real estate development east of the park, and the logs are being sawed at a sawmill nearby; a strange sight to see in the city and probably the only sawmill operating in the field in Greater New York.

Those who know and love these little ponds, which are typical of hundreds of others along the moraines of Long Island, but are the nearest to the city in a fairly natural state, wonder what is to become of them when the city begins to develop this new park. Will the steam shovel and grader attack their beautiful smooth outlines, made by the Glacial Period, and conventionalize them? Will the splendid trees be cut to give place to a golf course? There was never a better landscape architect than the ice sheets of the Pleistocene, and not a thing needs to be done to the existing contours to preserve beauty in the new park. Cannot the scientific societies and lovers of natural scenery persuade the Queens borough and the city park authorities to go easy on this pleasant terrain and to save a few of these little ponds (after removing the discarded automobiles and other junk) as they are, as preserves for plants, insects, microscopic water life and birds?

RAYMOND H. TORREY